

POOL PARKING URGENT? *See 7/28/64*

GAO Cools Off Air Force

By the Associated Press

A congressional watchdog agency has challenged the Air Force's designation of the parking lot next to the officers swimming pool at Andrews Air Force Base as "essential and urgently needed in the interest of self-defense."

The watchdog, the General Accounting Office, said in a report yesterday that the parking lot isn't essential at all and that the classification is merely a screen used to build the lot without congressional approval.

Besides the pool parking lot, the GAO cited such projects as a golf course, a riding stable and a pet hospital as it accused the Air Force of using funds to build projects without congressional approval.

Disciplinary Move Asked

The GAO demanded that the Air Force discipline the individuals responsible for the way used to finance the projects.

Commenting on the report, the Air Force said "some of the

problems disclosed by the audit report appear to have resulted primarily from unintended interpretations of directives and regulations in effect at the time the work was accomplished."

It added that it is revising its construction directives and believes this will solve the problem.

Other Instances

Here are some of the assertions made by the GAO:

1. In 1959 and 1960, the Air Force used \$272,000 of airport runway construction money to build a golf course, golf clubhouse, and riding stables at Lockbourne Air Force Base, Ohio. The GAO said Congress had authorized the runway but had no idea money would be diverted for recreational facilities.

2. During the 1961 fiscal year, the Air Force spent \$24,665 to convert a building into a food-inspection facility which it said was urgently needed. The Air Force, under the law, may

use small construction funds, without authorization from Congress, if the project is classified as urgent. But the GAO said its investigation showed the converted building was not used as a food-inspection facility at all but as a veterinary hospital for sentry dogs and pets on men on the base.

3. The Air Force awarded contracts for the installation of lawn sprinklers and an addition to the officers club at Kirtland Air Force Base, N. Mex., under the clause that permits spending of funds for urgent projects alone.

The GAO, commenting on the projects submitted as urgent, said they "were classified as urgently needed, to permit their construction without prior congressional approval, although it was apparent that the projects were so labeled not so much on the urgency of their need but on the likelihood that they would not be approved for accomplishment with military construction funds."